1: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
MA11 Kurd MA11
Yezidis MN10



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Y
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to coercion, and with the stick opens his own way to heaven.

K
Y
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So long as the body remains in the house hymns are chanted by the *kawwals*, who also accompany the body to the grave, carrying censers, which they swing as they go. For several successive days the friends of the deceased visit his resting-place, men and women in separate parties, every morning and evening, the latter to weep and wail and the former to sit in silence, burning incense the while.[1]

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As water is one of the emblems of *Yezîl*, the Life-giving Principle, the pouring of it into the mouth of the dying probably signifies, or it may be, is intended to confer, vitality after death, or metempsychosis in some form or other, this doctrine being believed to be held by the Yezidis.

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The only change made in their costume by the Kûrdish women as a sign of mourning is the substitution of a black veil for that usually worn out of doors.

[1] Comp. Badger, *The Nestorians, &c.*, p. 131.

story, widespread in the Middle East, tells of one such illiterate approached by a peasant woman with a letter, apparently bringing news of her husband on the pilgrimage to Mecca. "Should I rejoice or weep?" she anxiously inquired of the mulla who was studying the document intently. "Weep," he answered after a short time, and the woman tore her garments and went into mourning, assuming her spouse to have died in the course of his pious errand. Actually, however, the letter announced the safe arrival of the man in question, a message ordinarily causing the greatest rejoicing and the preparation of a feast of welcome. When the pilgrim returned, he was dismayed to find his house closed in mourning, and asked the neighbors who gathered in great excitement about him the identity of the deceased. "God is greatest! you are dead, Hajji," they replied. The matter was speedily explained by discussion, and the whole party sought of the mulla some reason for his peculiar temerity. "If I told the wife to rejoice," returned the latter, "in the arrogance of her demonstrations of joy she might have tempted the Lord to destroy her husband," and all were satisfied with these words. There are both poor and wealthy mullas, and they are able to marry according to their status in this sense. The darwish, as a religious mendicant, is always a man of the lowest class, but, as one learned in esoteric lore, even persons of the highest status are initiated into the mysteries of the darwish orders. In Rowanduz one could find a darwish in a demented

to replace the boy he had lost. Women share as much as their husbands in this desire. Lali Khan was so stricken by the death of Isma'il Beg, her son, that she made her mourning perpetual. If, for some reason, a man has no son, he often turns to those of his brother or sister, showering them with affection and gifts. Girls, of course, share in the love of their parents and do not receive treatment which would cause them to be too jealous of their brothers, but never acquire the standing of a male. The sarcophagus of Isma'il Beg has flowers placed next to it daily, and an animal, whose flesh is distributed to the poor, is slaughtered in his memory almost every week. In contrast, the son of Shakir Effendi pointed out the grave of his daughter who had died in infancy to visitors by throwing a pebble at it.

The third emphasis is that placed on seniority within the family. The male usually takes precedence over the female, and the eldest does the same over those younger than himself. Thus the children, both boys and girls, must observe respect toward their elder brothers and sisters, parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents.

Turning now to a more exact delineation of the relationships within the mal, little more has been done than to rephrase and combine several of the narratives recorded. The first question which might be treated is that of parents and their children. The relationship between a father and his son, as one might suspect from the foregoing, is one of the most important to the former,

knowledge of radio. She also always referred to the investigator as "the gentleman from Mosul," the furthest point of her geography. Without entering into extended discussion, it might be said here, in concluding the remarks on adult entertainment, that the educational level of the townspeople, excepting those who have attended school, is extremely low. One often offered persons of the lower class in Rowanduz and later in Egypt a small sum if they could name the first four caliphs, equivalent to asking an American or European Christian for the names of the first four books of the New Testament, and it was surprising how few were able to accomplish this seemingly easy feat. 871 [823]

If a man feels that he is approaching death, he often makes out his will in advance, a formality regulated by the government and arranged through the court of the judge. If a rich person has been unable to make the pilgrimage to Mecca during his lifetime, he usually sets aside a certain amount to be paid to someone who will make the journey in his name. Persons of great wealth or chieftains occasionally allot sums to be given to poor people who visit their graves and recite a prayer for them. When death takes place, all of the female relatives of the deceased and their friends gather at the house. "A certain old woman comes who sings in such a way that the people weep. This is Amina Hakim who is also the corpse-washer, mirdu shor, for the women. She earns her livelihood by serving in the houses of the rich, 763 [428] [788] [765] 764 767 [533]

usage is recorded in this connection. If a man dies at 764
night or when it is raining, the body is carried immediately to the mosque and left inside. The mullas read over it throughout the night, and tea is offered visitors on the porch of the building. The corpse-washer comes to the mosque and carries out his tasks there. It might be mentioned that ordinary burial is always performed on the day of death. The grave is prepared by laborers prior to the arrival of the procession, and is so oriented that when the corpse is laid within on its right side, the face will look in the general direction of Mecca, in Rowandux to the southwest. After the grave has been filled, the relatives and friends of the deceased return home, and refreshments are given to all callers. Gifts of food are sent to the house by friends and neighbors. Another interesting custom now appears. Three days after the 768
burial, a barber is called to cut the hair of the new [302]
head of the family of the deceased, if the latter has occupied this position. The house itself is rarely abandoned, except in those cases, common in the Middle East, in which some accident connected with the death, for [787]
example, one of the family getting blood on his hands, leads people to believe that continued occupancy would cause bad fortune.

There is no specific period of mourning, although 765
it is usually several months before normal life is resumed. The men of the family wear no visible sign, but the women

put on dark coloured clothing, black or deep blue. For most persons, an annual visit to the grave is required, and at this time a sheep is sacrificed and its flesh distributed to the poor. Wealthier persons may enjoy weekly visits and sacrifices, and those of the lower classes must often ignore even the yearly sacrifice. The funerals of women and children, depending on the status of their husbands or fathers, are conducted with less ostentation. There is no definite pattern of commemoration, weekly or annual, and, in answer to the inquiry, it was always said that these memorial parties of both men and women visited the grave "as long as all shall live."

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The cemetery of Rowanduz occupies the flat crest of the hill behind the town, and is dominated by a large oak tree, one of the few in the area, a point which will be encountered again. The graves are oriented in parallel lines with their heads pointed to the northwest. Most are oblong mounds plastered with mortar rising about a foot above the surface of the ground with a crudely hewn slab of stone, several feet in height, at each end. In some cases, the headstone of one serves as the foot of the next. Only a few have inscriptions, some etched and others carved in relief, and there was only one sarcophagus in the graveyard, a box of stone slabs bound with metal clasps and elaborately carved decorations. Family burial plots are separated by low fences of interlaced thorn. Two graves were surrounded by a low, quadrilateral rubble wall, indicating the grave of a sayyid, a descendant of

764 [137] [211] 766

4: Human E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11



commenced from the cemetery. He was assisted by the child's maternal uncle, still. The washing was done, as had been the case with the little girl, women by the mother and close female relatives. In this house it was performed in the bath room. Being a woman, I was unable to see what the child was placed upon, but the body was dressed in the antechamber of the room on a bench there. In this case, the death involving a male, the material for ornaments and washing glove was torn into pieces by a man, the uncle, though the washing glove was also torn away by one of the women (half-sister of the dead child). Neither the mother nor any other woman of the house broke into lamentation, and no sacrifice of any animal was made, but just as with the little girl, the child glided out of its mother's world from the moment the corpse washer had lifted it up and carried it into the bathroom. Later, it was carried to the mosque wrapped, as the little girl had been, in a prayer rug outside the ornaments. In the grave the body lies on the right side with the face pointing in the direction towards Mekka. The dead are covered with stones, and then with earth in a flattened oblong mound. Two flat, roughly-hewn oblong slabs—one at the head and one at the feet[91]—are raised. The burial grounds outside the villages and provincial towns were, as a rule, marked by one or more big trees, the only trees of any great size in the landscape. Burial places looked bare and barren, like those in Arabia. In 1894 Oberay[92] stressed the great difference between the dreary, naked burial grounds of the Arabs, devoid of vegetation, and those of the Turks, which are planted and have sculptured gravestones, whereas the Arab stones, like those in Kurdish burial grounds, are rough, undecorated, and without inscriptions. According to what I was told by my interpreter, a relative's grave is visited for five years after the death. The women went out there every Friday, a thing I did not notice in respect of the children's deaths. After that the grave is forgotten.

The religious lead mourning meal for friends and acquaintances referred to by Jaynboll[93], customary in Islamic areas, was not given in the case of the two children's deaths. The day the child died, no food was cooked in the house, and the only thing obtainable was bread and water melon. Nikitine mentions that among Kurds a special pastry[94] was issued three days after the funeral to neighbours and friends. This was only done in the case of an adult death, not with a child, a thing I both noticed and was told. Some hours after the death visits of condolence begin. They are made by women, always without jewellery. These visits continued for three days. As part of the mourning ceremony the bedroom that had been used for the washing of the corpse was closed, and neither heated nor used for the next eight days. The period of mourning for a child is fourteen days, during which time the cinema is not visited and picnics are not attended. For an adult member of the family the mourning period was said to last for two to three years, visits of condolence being paid for a week. During the mourning years visits may be paid to other families in cases of deaths, but otherwise people remain at home. Women wear black or dark coloured dresses, and any marriage is celebrated as quietly as possible. The sudden death of an old man at Topzawa the day before a triple wedding resulted in the men's dance, otherwise obligatory, being dropped.

To sum up the most typical features of Kurdish funerals in Iraq: They take place immediately after death. No death certificate is issued if the deceased is an infant. The ornaments must be of new, white cotton material, which even in the middle of the night can be purchased in the city, the owner of the booth being summoned for this purpose. Girls are washed by women and boys by men; in both

4. Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Hard MA11



764 risen without using the washing board stored at and last out by the mosque, and not within sight of the mother. Her role is a completely passive one. The ceremonies used consist of an unequal amount of pieces of cloth. Neither knife nor scissors are used to divide the material. Both the girl and the boy are carried from the house to the mosque, and then the burial ground, overland in a prayer carpet over the ceremonies. Children are carried by a male relative (mother's brother, aff), accompanied by other men. Lamentations incompatible with Islam and the sacrifice of a fowl were practised in the uneducated urban milieu. The sacrifice was not specially because a child was dead as is the case in Egypt, but because two deaths in the family had occurred shortly after each other and it was desired to avert a third in the near future. The mourning period for a child is a fortnight. The bathroom used for washing the corpse was shut for eight days afterwards. The women of the family visit the grave every Friday for five years, after which it is forgotten. Memorial cakes are distributed to friends and acquaintances in connection with a death. The mourning period for adults is two-three years. Visits of condolence take place for eight days when a child dies. The women of the family remove their ornaments and abstain from baths during this time.

[364] [765] 765 [515] [301]

Fig. 95. Burial place with big trees outside the village. Tripoura.

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152 leader, if he has a son who is being circumcised, to pay for the sons of poor people, and to give the feast. There is thus a tendency for the headman's sons to be circumcised in a common ritual with a large number of boys. This might be thought of as reminiscent of some form of age-grades, and may be vaguely symbolic of loyalty ties within such generations of village boys.

When a child loses his first *deciduous tooth*, a special dish is commonly prepared and given to the neighbors «because the parents are very proud that their child has become so big».

302 When a girl feels she is growing up, she may, with a few friends,
883 decide she wishes to be *tattooed*, usually only moderate small designs on face or hands. This is performed by an old woman specialist rarely a resident of the village, but is, everyone insisted, now going out of use as a practice. There is no formal rule as to the age at which this is done, but a girl presuming at too early and age would probably be ridiculed. The controls seem essentially the the same as those on the use of cosmetics in Western society, and the time of tattooing does not correspond to puberty in any one-to-one relation as a rite de passage.

585 *Marriage* is one of the most exciting festivals of the village, and usually takes place in the autumn after the harvest, to ensure plentiful supplies. The process of choosing a spouse has been discussed above (pp. 26 ff.) — the ceremony itself is most colorful in the case of marriages that connect two villages, since then the aspect of conspicuous exhibition of wealth is most stressed, and the bridal procession from the girl's to the husband's home most impressive. The celebrations should traditionally last three days, and involve all one would expect of eating, smoking, and dancing, offering opportunities for all kinds of informal social activities. Unless excessive factionalism interferes, the whole village takes part in the festivities.

• 765 *Death.* After a death, the members of the bereaved household remain at home for three days, and friends and relations come visiting, express their sympathy, and are served food and tea. After three days, the throats of two or three sheep are cut, in honor of the deceased, and the meat is «given to the poor» — that is, distributed

7: Barth E-5 (1951) 1953 MA11 Kurd MA11

765 in the village as a whole[1]). Any conspicuous excesses in celebration are however tempered by pious ideals of moderation.

574 551 621 576 To summarize: the *feast*, in its various religious and personal applications, offers a forum for competition and rivalry between persons, especially in the field of wealth, but this aspect is somewhat tempered by ideals of moderation and control inherent in the other scales by which individuals are evaluated. Furthermore, these communal or semi-communal occasions formalize the relative prestige positions of individuals, as seen by other individuals, and by the group as a whole. These prestige hierarchies find expression especially in situations where a regular order of serving or acting is observed. When all the tea comes out of the host's one samovar, individuals must necessarily be served in a sequence. In Kurdish culture, as in most other cultures, the *first* position in a sequence, and in fact precedence in general, is regarded as symbolic of status. These occasions thus necessarily come to express a status hierarchy, and that in a familiar context where the symbolism is clear and rivalry for relative places conscious. In seating, in serving, and in any sequence of appearance, this rule is followed. In the fluid type of hierarchy found in the Kurdish villages, where status positions are not crystallized in a formal structure, but are constantly being re-evaluated in terms, in the final instance, of the common denominator of *power*, it is essential that some mechanism is found whereby relative status and power can be compared and made public by non-violent means. Characteristically, practically all the major communal occasions in the villages of Southern Kurdistan involve several instances where this hierarchy can become expressed.

## *RAIDING AND WARFARE*

721 701 The final and most spectacular occasion for the emergence of leadership and the expression of a status hierarchy is offered by the

[1]) This ritual slaughter of animals has a general significance as a sign of respect — when an important visitor arrives, the throat of a sheep is cut just before the visitor approaches, so that the blood may flow across the road just as he passes over.

extent demands that her price should be a high one. It would need a very intimate knowledge of all concerned to find out what real transactions take place within the village on the occasion of a marriage. Where the marriage is to someone outside the village the position is more clear, especially in the case of the Aghas, though here again there is a tendency to exaggerate the figures involved. A point of some interest is the frequency with which Aghas or their sons marry the daughters of townspeople. For instance a son of Sheikh Mohammed of Balash was married to a daughter of Mustafa Effendi, the leading notable of Rowanduz, and one of the wives of Mir Emin Amin of Dergala was also a townswoman. Such marriages are socially approved of as it is considered that townswomen bring with them an air of culture and sophistication. The reciprocal marriage of Aghas daughter to townsman's son is however most unusual, mainly because the townsman considers the tribal girl raw and uncivilised. The one sided nature of the transaction thus represents a further periodic cash loss to the tribal group without any compensating return.* It is not to be supposed that the bride price payment is the only economic transaction taking place on the occasion of a marriage. Near relatives on both sides send presents to the bridegroom; these may be in kind or cash and in the case of marriages between important Agha families may amount to substantial sums.

Death. Compared with normal Kurdish usage the mourning ceremonies of the Hevis, at any rate for Aghas, are unusually prolonged. While I was staying at Balash the wife of Mustafa Agha, second son of Sheikh Mohammed, died. As Mustafa was the Agha of a neighbouring village I did not see the ceremonies involved. I was told that the proceedings consisted principally of the bereaved sitting at home in his Guest House and providing food and drink for all those friends and relatives who may think fit to come and condole with him. This would go on for a month. Moreover it was reckoned that as Mustafa had only a small Guest House all his less immediate kin would have to be accommodated at Balash. I gathered that the mourners would bring with them gifts which would at least approximately compensate for the cost of entertaining them, but the immediate economic strain occasioned by a death such as this may be considerable. As soon as Sheikh Mohammed heard the news he sent off riders to Rowanduz to fetch four casks of sugar (56 kilos each), two bags of rice and a big roll

* Formerly it appears it was quite customary for commoners to sell their unwanted girl children to townsfolk. The girls were known as Kuniya. During adolescence she was a slave servant of the purchaser but might be married off quite respectably when she grew up. The system appears to have much in common with the mui tsai system of South China.

765 of cigarette papers. The scale of entertainment naturally varies
574 greatly with the status of the deceased; moreover the death of a male is
401 in every case far more serious than the death of a female. So far as I am aware the ceremonial consideration is similar in the case of [illegible] families though on a smaller scale.*

The Mulla

793 The Mulla has his part to play in the ritual both on occasions
595 of marriage and death, and gains some appropriate reward. His interest
431 in the marriage ritual is on the decline. Government regulations now require that marriages must be registered with the police, and the marriage is legal without any religious ceremony. The tendency is therefore to give presents to the police rather than the Mulla.

* The above remarks do not apply at all to nomad tribes; I was told that among the Herki the whole ceremonial is concluded in one day. The procedure was said to contain much ritual of non-Moslem type.